

The District 3 Slate



"Our nation is moving to the next millennium, but our libraries are still stuck in the Dark Ages."

Supervisor Pam Slater

Special library edition!

County Supervisor Pam Slater



County Supervisor
Pam Slater

Dear Friend:

Libraries are the heart of our communities.

When a neighborhood library is energetic, active and involves young and old, then the health of the neighborhood thrives.

When a library struggles to stay open, contains outdated books and badly needs repair, the health of the neighborhood suffers.

Libraries serve as the gateway to a world of discovery and learning. Our public libraries offer everyone, regardless of their position in life, a chance to learn.

You may not be able to afford a Rembrandt, but you can find out why his art was significant.

Read the book that won last year's Pulitzer Prize for fiction. See if you think it should have won.

Learn why we still live with the results of the Missouri Compromise.

Curious? The answers are in your public library.

Pam Slater

Library Authority proposes ballot measure to improve local branch libraries countywide

Neighborhood libraries across the county could receive \$423 million more in funding, if voters approve Proposition L next year.

Members of the San Diego County Regional Library Authority set the special election for March 2, 1999 for a ballot measure that will temporarily increase the county's existing sales tax by one-quarter of a percent for five years.

The measure has an automatic sunset clause that can only be changed by another vote of the people.

"Our nation is getting ready to move into the next millennium, but in many cases, our neighborhood libraries are still stuck in the Dark Ages," said Supervisor Pam Slater, who represents the county on the library authority.

"This measure will allow local libraries to add new technology, open new branches, expand their hours, buy more books or remodel old buildings," Slater added.

If approved, the measure would increase the existing sales tax from 7.75 percent to 8 percent. When the 5-year period ends, the tax expires.

See **Ballot** on back page ...



Recognizing the effort: Marilyn Crouch, left, of the Serra Cooperative Library System, honors Supervisor Pam Slater for her work to improve local libraries.

Take a quick peek at libraries of the future

What will your local library look like in the future? Will it have computers everywhere? Will it have books? Will it even have walls?

As technological advances make more information available to more people, library leaders across the state agree they must reexamine the role of the local

library.

"The future holds promise for innovation and progress in how libraries accomplish their mission," said Supervisor Pam Slater. "The digital age will complement local libraries instead of making books obsolete, as some might fear."

In a study prepared by the

Benton Foundation, library leaders envision future libraries as a hybrid which provide both standard book collections, as well as access to nearly unlimited amounts of electronic information.

Participants in the study said they could see a time when a

See **Future** on back page ...

The staff of Supervisor Pam Slater

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Close, but not quite there: A recap of 1996's Proposition A

To use a baseball analogy, the 1996 campaign for Proposition A was a deep fly ball caught at the fence.

The campaign for Proposition A won strong support across the county from voters. However, it came just short of reaching the two-thirds voter approval it needed.

Proposition A won approval from 59 percent of the vote. But it needed 66 percent.

"When you consider the limited time - three months - we had to get out the message, it's encouraging to see the support we received," said Supervisor Pam

Slater, who helped lead the campaign for Proposition A.

Recently, the San Diego County Regional Library Authority placed a similar measure on the March 1999 ballot. (See related story on page 1.)

Proposition A would have temporarily increased the county's sales tax by one quarter of a percent for five years. The measure included an automatic

sunset clause which could have been changed only by another vote of the people. After the five-year period ended, the sales tax would have automatically expired.

"In 1996, I don't think the details of the proposed measure were widely known," Slater said. "Putting a similar measure on the 1999 ballot gives us ample time to get the message out."

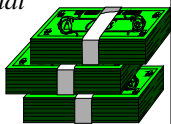
Although not completely successful, the 1996 campaign did reach some significant accomplishments, Slater added.

The campaign focused everyone's attention on the condition of libraries across the county, and it brought together elected officials from different cities and the county together for a common goal.

See **Recap** on back page ...

Dividing up the proposal

Under the ballot measure, each city receives library funds in proportion to its share of regular sales taxes collected in that city. Here's where the money will go:



Jurisdiction	5-Year Total
Carlsbad	\$19,883,005
Chula Vista	\$21,194,636
Coronado	\$2,651,587
Del Mar	\$1,672,577
El Cajon	\$21,716,264
Encinitas	\$9,482,625
Escondido	\$29,410,796
Imperial Beach	\$879,490
La Mesa	\$12,119,951
Lemon Grove	\$6,513,614
National City	\$16,190,623
Oceanside	\$13,084,632
Poway	\$6,777,630
San Diego	\$212,469,677
San Marcos	\$10,748,138
Santee	\$7,336,013
Solana Beach	\$2,460,102
Vista	\$10,297,823
Co. of San Diego	\$20,125,810

Meet Betty Knutson: Ace library volunteer for the county's libraries in District Three

For Betty Knutson, Saturday mornings mean it's time for a reward.

She considers those mornings the most gratifying aspect of her volunteer work on behalf of the Cardiff-by-the-Sea branch library.

What's the reward?

"Walking in on a Saturday morning, and seeing the kids as they listen to the stories being read to them," she said.

Since moving to Cardiff-by-the-Sea in 1965, Knutson has been a self-effacing dynamo on behalf of the Cardiff branch library.

"We're lucky to have people donate their time and money to the library," Knutson said. "We've been called 'folksy and fiesty.'"

Knutson helped found the Friends of the Library during the 1970s and has remained a tireless worker on behalf of the library's needs since then.

She's now on the Friends of the Library's Board of Directors, and she is a past president of the Reading and Learning Center, which is next door to the library.

"I wish we could clone Betty," said Supervisor Pam Slater, who represents the Third District. "Every community and neighborhood needs someone like her."

Both Betty and her husband Duane have worked behind the scenes for the library over the years, said Faith Niles, the library's branch manager.

They've both been there to lend a hand as the library has

(also on Newcastle) and now, finally, settled at 2027 San Elijo Avenue, in the Town Center complex.

Knutson also lends her "folksy and fiesty" brand of volunteerism to the Cardiff-by-the-Sea Chamber of Commerce, and it has shown up in other Cardiff battles as well.

When Encinitas became an incorporated city, CalTrans removed the sign "Cardiff-by-the-Sea" and Rand McNally removed the name from its maps. Knutson decided she would not sit by and watch Cardiff lose its identity. She helped spearhead the successful effort to restore both the sign and the map listing.

That spirit carries over to Knutson's volunteer work for the library, Niles said.

"She's a real fighter," Niles said. "She's wonderful to work with. If she says she'll do something, she does it."

What is Knutson's biggest challenge in her library work?

"Convincing people that both small community libraries and large libraries have a place ... and that you don't close down an 85-year-old library," she said.



Take a good look: Because this is one of the few opportunities you'll have to see Betty Knutson not volunteering her time at the Cardiff branch library.

needed it, from helping to get rent money for the library to looking for a permanent building, Niles said.

Knutson knows the Cardiff branch has seen its share of doorsteps.

Since she has been involved, the library has been located downtown at the historical building, then in the Jepson Building on Newcastle Avenue, then in the Carpentier Building

Fast Facts on county libraries in the Third District

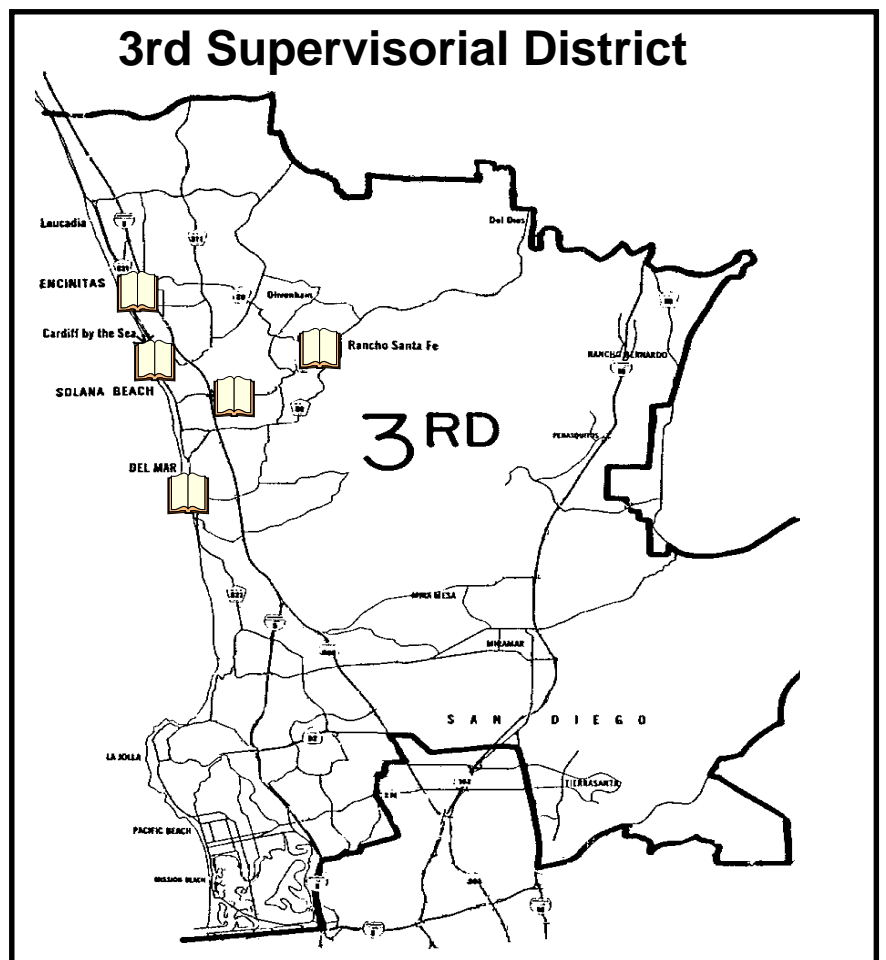
The **Cardiff-By-The-Sea** branch is located at 2027 San Elijo Ave. Open Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Thursdays and Saturdays, the library's "penny jar" has been a fixture since 1989.

The **Del Mar** library, led by Librarian Kathleen Kaiser, is at 1309 Camino del Mar. It is open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. In 1996, the library moved to its present site, the historic St. James Church location, which was restored by the City of Del Mar and private donations.

With a spectacular view overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the **Encinitas** library, at 540 Cornish Drive, is led by Branch Manager Michele Armbrust. Library hours are Monday, 12 p.m.-8 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; and Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Periodically showcasing unique cultural events such as East Indian Odissi dance, the **Solana Beach** library is located at 981 Lomas Santa Fe Drive, #F and is open Tuesday from 12 p.m.-8 p.m. and Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Founded in 1923, the **Rancho Santa Fe** library at 17040 Avenida de Acacias is open Monday through Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Staff works closely with the Rancho Santa Fe Guild in a partnership to provide library services to the community.



(Note: The city's system serves branch libraries in the City of San Diego.)

Board takes close look at long-term library funding options

Anyone who's balanced a checkbook can tell you it's hard to plan future investments when you're unsure if you'll have enough to make ends meet.

In the same way, the county's library system must develop a stable, long-term source of funding, so that it can plan how to increase hours, provide more

service and open new branches, said Supervisor Pam Slater.

"When you look at what we can afford to spend per person vs. other cities or the statewide

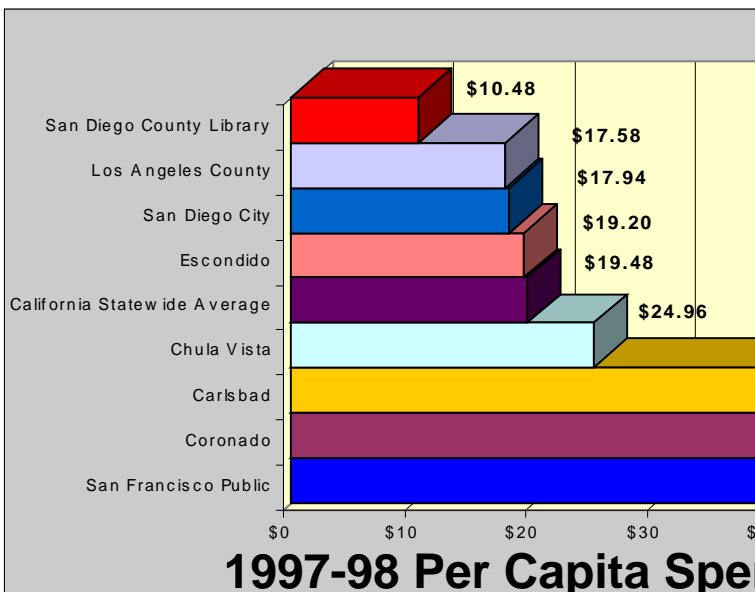
average, it's abysmal," Slater said. "We need to find funding that we can depend on, so we can rely less on funds that are always on the chopping block of somebody's budget ax."

During the Board of Supervisors discussion in January, board members discussed three options.

Board members agreed to start talks with the cities about service contracts which would allow the cities to "buy" more library services than the County Library presently can provide.

In another option, the supervisors told county staff to review a possible permanent redirection in property taxes which would shift more money toward county libraries. This option would require a change in state legisla-

See Long-term on back page ...



Ballot: Vote set for March

To pass, the measure needs the approval from two-thirds of the voters. A similar measure fell short with 59 percent of the vote in November 1996. (See related story, page 2).

"It's a rare occasion when I decide to support raising the sales tax," Slater said. "But I believe this particular ballot measure, as it's proposed -- targeted directly and only for libraries, which must be supported by a 66 percent vote -- has enough safeguards in it to warrant my support."

Slater pointed out that measure fairly distributes the sales taxes received. The taxes generated in a community go back to support the local branch library

in that community. In the measure, cities receive library funds in proportion to their share of sales taxes collected locally.

"So a vote in favor of the measure is a vote in support of your own branch library," Slater said.

The proposed measure ensures that the sales taxes actually increase the funding for libraries. Jurisdictions can not receive the tax money and then cut their existing budgets. Instead, they must maintain their current levels of library funding in order to receive the tax proceeds.

"Finally, this measure benefits local, neighborhood libraries," Slater added. "None of the money goes to a downtown San Diego library."

Future: The library's role

library's collection will, because of growing electronic capabilities, become everyone's collection.

"I believe we'll still see a need for actual, physical library buildings," Slater added. "The local library building serves as the heart of our neighborhoods. It acts as a center piece for a community, and that's important."

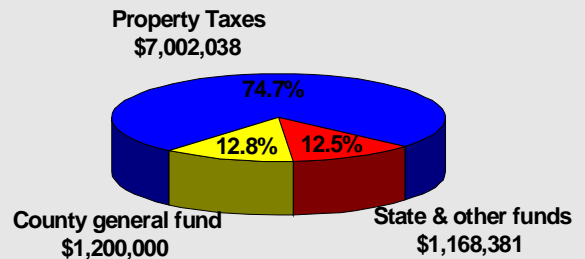
The idea of libraries acting as neighborhood centers was summed up by one 18-year-old

student taking part in the Benton Foundation study. Said the student, "You can take your kid to the library, but you can't take your kid to a website."

Libraries also provide a place where people who can't afford computers or on-line information can access those resources.

"The free flow of information is vital to function as a free society," Slater said. "That's why people have described libraries as 'the people's university.'"

1997-98 County Library Revenue



Long-term: Options studied

tion.

County staff will report back on all the options during the summer's budget deliberations.

The County Library's budget totals \$9.4 million. Of that amount, property taxes make up \$7 million. The county's General

Fund contributes about \$1.2 million, and state funds, fines, fees and private donations comprise about \$1.1 million.

"This action reflects the direction of the Board of Supervisors," Slater said. "We want libraries to be a higher priority."

Recap: Review of Prop. A

"Elected officials from all the different library systems joined forces to support the measure," Slater said. "I was encouraged to see the cooperation, and I was proud of the way representatives from Encinitas, Del Mar, Solana Beach, Carlsbad, the City of San Diego and the County all pitched in."

Support for Proposition A was high within Slater's Third

Supervisorial District.

Communities such as Pacific Beach, San Carlos, La Jolla and the north coastal communities of Del Mar, Solana Beach and Encinitas have traditionally shown strong support for their neighborhood libraries.

"We'll be counting on strong support from those communities and others in the March 1999 vote," Slater said.

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